

DALLAS TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD

Expert maintains his position on property values

By SARAH HITE
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A real estate expert retained by Chief Gathering LLC maintained his position during questioning by opposing counsel Monday that a natural gas metering station would have no adverse effect on property values or community interests.

John J. Coyle III, of the real estate appraisal firm Coyle, Lynch & Co. based in Sharon Hill, continued to testify at a township zoning board hearing on behalf of Chief. The

company is in pursuit of special zoning exemptions to build a metering facility off Hildebrandt Road about 1,300 feet from the Dallas School District campus.

At a hearing in July, Coyle testified he studied areas in Delaware County, Brookhaven Borough and Middletown Township. Developments in these municipalities were built after the construction of the Spectra pipeline, which was completed approximately 50 years ago.

He said there was no adverse effect on property values over

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the course of 30 years in both municipalities because of the location of the pipeline.

Upon questioning from opposing counsel and the zoning hearing board solicitor, Coyle said the nearest metering facility along the Spectra line is about 2,000 feet from the nearest dwelling and was not considered in his study.

Some residents who live

along Fairground Road in Dallas Township estimate their properties are within 600 feet of the proposed Chief metering station.

Coyle, who testified his firm was paid about \$24,000 by Chief thus far, said he did not consider the Spectra metering facility in his study because a metering building functions the same as a pipeline with gas

flowing through it via pipeline. The difference is that the metering building measures the gas, which he felt wasn't a significant factor in the study.

Resident Jim DeMichele and attorney Mark McNealis both asked Coyle whether the media attention this issue has received and the perceived notions of danger that lie within the community could have an effect on property values.

"What it has is, it has an effect on people's potential choices," Coyle said.

He said detrimental influence, which would pose a risk to a

resident's physical being or to the property, is usually a long-term situation. Coyle said the short period of construction at the site off Hildebrandt Road and the subsequent "benign" metering facility would not pose any harm to property values, roads or community infrastructure.

In fact, Coyle said, the pipeline and metering facility would add to the infrastructure of Dallas Township and beyond.

"...It would be a benefit because Dallas is not an island...," he said.

COFFEE with a smile

By SARAH HITE
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Talk about an eye-opener. Don't be surprised to pick up coffee on Friday morning from the drive-through window at Curry Donuts on Route 415 and see barista Rose Higgins wearing a scuba mask. Or a stethoscope. Or a cowboy hat.

Rose's weekly getup is part of a fun customer appreciation ploy called "Crazy Fridays," where she and her coffee-serving companion Sandy Scott dress up to give the early morning hours a little more pizzazz.

The pair started the Friday tradition after renting prisoner costumes for a Muscular Dystrophy Association event in late March. The MDA Lock-Up event raises money by asking for donations to "bail out" community members from "jail."

Higgins and Scott donned their black-and-white stripes during business hours long before the event to help raise money for the cause.

After seeing how much fun they and their customers had during that time, the pair decided to make outrageous outfits a recurring theme at the coffee shop.

"We've done crazy doctors, grass skirts, princesses and queens," said Higgins, of Harneys Lake.

Dressing up was only the next step for the already-decked out doughnut shop. Higgins said she and Scott decorate the place every season, and they keep adding to their collection of festive flourishes throughout the year.

"Crazy Fridays" have caused a ruckus among customers, and it keeps them coming back for more.

"We have people coming in on Tuesday asking what we're doing on Friday," said Higgins.

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"We love it. We love to see the customers happy."

One group in particular has embraced the wacky weekly ritual as its own. About eight women from the Misericordia University water aerobics class who come to Curry Donuts every Friday recently dressed in their "jammies" to start their own "Crazy" day.

They were greeted by Higgins and Scott with laughter and Silly String spraying on that fateful Friday morning.

"I don't know how they found out we were dressing up," said Janis Borton, 77, of Dallas. "We wanted to surprise them."

The women come to Curry to talk about worldly issues, to give and receive advice and to swap recipes, but mostly to have a good time with friends.

"This is our mental health therapy," said Borton. "We come here to laugh, and solve the world's problems. But basically to laugh."

Higgins loves having the water aerobics group participate in the kooky costumes, and she tries to involve all the customers in the fun.

"We'll give someone a hat or a sign to hold and take a picture," she said.

Though Higgins has a passion for crazy fashion during work hours, home is a little saner.

"I don't even decorate at home," she said.



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Members of the Friday Morning Swim and Coffee Group at Curry Donuts in Dallas are, from left, first row, Janice Borton, Judy Schoonover, Anna Skrosky, Lynn Schlow, Second row, Diane Fey, Debbie Miller, Jule Wnorowski and Caroline Williams.



ABOVE: Rose Higgins pours coffee at Curry Donuts in Dallas while looking through a scuba mask.



AT RIGHT: Rose Higgins, left, and Sandy Scott, the morning staff at Curry Donuts in Dallas, serve up merriment in addition to coffee.

Back Mountain schools welcome athletes from West Side CTC

Career Center cuts sports; students have option to play for home district.

By SARAH HITE
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School districts in the Back Mountain are welcoming student athletes for the 2011-12 school year after budgetary constraints forced West Side Career & Technology Center in Pringle to cut all athletics programs.

Students who live in both the Dallas and Lake-Lehman school districts and attend West Side CTC can play fall, winter and spring sports without missing a beat.

Nancy Tkatch, administrative director at West Side CTC, said the decision to remove the athletics program, which included boys' baseball, boys' basketball, girls' softball and volleyball for

both genders, was a quick but difficult process.

"We had to look at the pros and cons of having sports versus not," she said. "...Kids will have an opportunity to play a much larger variety of sports than we offered here."

Nancy Roberts, athletic director for the Dallas School District, said after she heard the news, she asked the guidance department at Dallas to make her aware of any students looking to participate in sports in the 2011-12 season.

Despite a busy calendar with scheduling practices and games, staying within a budget, ordering supplies and other tasks, Roberts said her main concern is working with coaches and athletes to ensure the season plays out well for everyone.

Roberts said the most difficult part of continuing athletics after the career center cut its programs is the transition of team-

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For more information about Lake-Lehman's athletic programs, call Athletic Director Tom Rokita at 675-2165. For information about Dallas School District sports, call Athletic Director Nancy Roberts at 674-7257.

mates and environment.

"One of the things about Dallas is that we're very accommodating and very hospitable," she said. "We're very sensitive to the lifestyle and the emotions and the challenges it takes, especially at these ages."

With the expectation that some students will transfer from West Side CTC, Roberts said she will take those extra steps to keep students comfortable and confident.

"My sincere feeling about that is to make their transition a really good transition and have a good experience because I know how hard it is for any student athlete

to make that transition to a new place," she said.

Roberts addresses these issues with coaches before the start of every season to ensure students are aware of the resources available to them should an issue arise.

One student from West Side CTC has begun playing a new sport at a new school and is doing just fine.

Seventeen-year-old Jordan Dolman, of Trucksville, started playing football for the Dallas Mountaineers this year.

West Side CTC did not offer football in its athletic program, but Dolman has always wanted to

play. He will attend classes at both schools to accommodate the transition.

Dolman played baseball for three years at West Side CTC and also played a season of basketball. He was disappointed that the school was cutting the programs, but he now has an opportunity to pursue his desire for football — a sport he has only played through pick-up games and mini-leagues.

"I'm excited about going into a brand new school and starting a fresh school year," he said. "I hope everyone remembers me but, if not, I have the football team to talk to. I went to school with some of these kids from sixth to eighth grade but people change. I think it will be an easy transition."

Football coach Ted Jackson said Dolman is proving himself on the field and sees no difficulties in his transition from base-

ball player to football star.

"I wish we had him when he was a sophomore," said Jackson. "He's doing really well."

Jim McGovern, superintendent of the Lake-Lehman School District, disagrees with the West Side joint operating committee's decision to cut sports, feeling sports teaches lessons on and off the field that stay with an athlete for life.

"You learn a lot about life from sports and I'm not convinced the budget's problems are solved by cutting the programs," he said.

He encourages any student living within the Lake-Lehman School District who attends West Side CTC to call the junior/senior high school athletic director for more information about participating in athletics.

"(Change) is a difficult part of life, but it can also be a learning experience and a positive experience," said McGovern.